



**State of Alaska, Japan Office
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Chilean Salmon

Imports of Chilean Salmon to Japan for January hit an all-time monthly high. Forecasts point to a healthy volume of imports by the season's end. The import volume for trout totaled 6,000 tons, exceeding last year's quantities for the same month - the expectation this year is also quite large.

Imports of Norwegian trout have been increasing since the beginning of January and are expected to rise again in March. Reasons for the increase may include an increased demand by processor packers, as there are no clear indications consumption is increasing.

Frozen Chilean coho and Norwegian trout are in the same price range – approx. 500 yen per kilo. Demand for the products continues to be strong.

(Nikkan Hokkai Keizai Newspaper, dated March 6, 2001)

Ikura

Russian imports of frozen ikura in January totaled 300 tons (the accumulated total from June 2000 to January 2001 was 6,600 tons, a 15% increase over the same period last year). Approx. one percent is reported to be chum and sockeye salmon roe. This is parallel to the import increase in trout (masu) roe, supplied to processors for soy sauce-flavored ikura products.

The demand for frozen ikura for the processed market has also been increasing. Many Japanese processors have been asking for frozen roe from Russia and USA. The produce from the USA has strict freshness requirements, though recent processing technology will improve freshness. These added costs can be recovered only if the high ikura prices remain.

(Nikkan Hokkai Keizai Newspaper, dated March 3, 2001)

King Crab

The Russian king crab market has been stable since its fishery was brought to a complete halt last January. Even if the fishery were to be re-opened and an auction held, supplies of king crab will still be short - especially in the higher grades. The Russian crab fishery in the Pacific Rim has been prohibited from catching king crab, bairdi, and opilio. As a result, processing vessels for large- and medium-sized frozen crab in the Kamchakka area have declined at the end of this last year. It has been confirmed that approx. 30 live crab vessels are currently fishing illegally.

The supply of live crab is not expected to reach last year's levels, even if the Russian king crab fishery were to reopen. Production is not expected to resume this spring and summer, indicating a sharp decline in the future supply of frozen crab. No fisheries are expected to reopen after September 2001.

- Current prices offered by king crab importers for average-grade large (L) crab range from 2,300 - 2,350 yen per kilo, boiled.
- Supplies of extra large (2L) crab are almost nonexistent in the market. Medium(M) crab is selling for 1,900 yen per kilo.
- Prices for frozen crab are as follows: large 1,950 - 2,000 yen/kilo, medium 1,750 - 1,800 yen/kilo, and extra large (2L) over 2,500 yen/kilo.

(Nikkan Hokkai Keizai Newspaper, dated March 3, 2001)